



## TENNESSEE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

312 Rosa L Parks Ave, 23rd Floor, Nashville, TN 37243

(615) 741-5825 FAX (615) 253-1886

<http://www.tn.gov/humanrights>

Join us on Facebook – [fb.com/TNHumanRightsCommission](https://www.facebook.com/TNHumanRightsCommission)

---

# MEDIA RELEASE

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Susannah Berry

[Susannah.Berry@tn.gov](mailto:Susannah.Berry@tn.gov)

(615) 253-1608

## Tennessee to Celebrate International Human Rights Day

Human Rights Day in Tennessee has become a time to celebrate the leaders of yesterday and recognize those taking up the torch for tomorrow, a time to look at battles won and lessons learned as well as to inspire the youth of today to do something about the state of the world tomorrow. It occurs each year on December 10<sup>th</sup>, and this year the celebration will take place at the Howard Office Building in the Sonny West Conference Center.

The event centers around the Human Rights Lifetime Achievement awards. Awardees this year include the **Rev. James "Tex" Thomas**, pastor of Jefferson Street Missionary Baptist Church, who is often referred to as the "Mayor of Jefferson Street" for his work on issues that affect North Nashville; **Elliot Ozment**, the founder and managing attorney at Ozment Law who has been a longtime advocate for civil and immigrant rights in Tennessee; and **Carrie Gentry**, who was active during the civil rights movement in Nashville, helping students get to sit-ins and bailing them out of jail after they were arrested.

"Rising Advocate" awards will also be given to individuals who show great promise in the field of human rights. Planning committee member Beverly L. Watts, Executive Director for the Tennessee Human Rights Commission, said, "The Planning Committee is humbled by the contributions of our Lifetime Achievement Awardees. And it is truly encouraging to see the impact our Rising Advocates are already making in early stages of their advocacy for human rights." The Rising Advocate awards this year will go to **Gatluak Thach** with the **Nashville International Center for Empowerment** and **Stephanie Teatro** with the **Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition**.

In addition to hearing from the awardees, attendees will hear from several community leaders regarding current human rights issues facing Tennesseans. Dr. Forrest Harris, President of American Baptist College, Tasha French Lemley, Executive Director of the Contributor and Pat Shea, Executive Director of the YWCA of Middle Tennessee, will speak on education, homelessness and domestic violence. The panel will be moderated by Dr. Oscar Miller, Chair of the Sociology Department at Tennessee State University.

The event on Tuesday, December 10<sup>th</sup> is free and open to the public. Networking begins at 4 pm and the program starts at 4:30. For more information or to become involved with this year's celebration, visit [www.nashvillehumanrights.org](http://www.nashvillehumanrights.org).

###